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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SEVENTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 29 April 1991, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. de MARCO (Malta)

- Tribute to the memory of his late Majesty King Olav V of Norway
- Earthquakes in Costa Rica and Panama
- Expression of sympathy to the Government and people of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations
- Adoption of the agenda and organization of work [8] (continued)

  (a) Reopening of agenda items 17 (h), 79 (b), 118 and 126 (c)

  (b) Request for the inclusion of an additional item submitted by the Secretary-General

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- Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations: report of the Fifth Committee [134] (continued)

- Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations [117] (continued)

  (a) Report of the Secretary-General

  (b) Letter from the Permanent Representative of Ghana

  (c) Letter from the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg

  (d) Letter from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden

- Programme of work

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF HIS LATE MAJESTY KING OLAV V OF NORWAY

The PRESIDENT: It is my sad duty to recall to the General Assembly the death of His Majesty King Olav V of Norway, which occurred on 17 January 1991.

Olav was the Crown Prince, then the King to three generations of Norwegians - from the newly won independence in 1905, through two world wars and the rebuilding of a devastated country, to the prosperity and the internationalization of recent decades.

King Olav V was widely perceived as a solid guarantee for Norway's reliability and commitment in international co-operation. He took a keen interest in, and had extensive knowledge and experience of, international affairs. In that context, he was a strong supporter of the United Nations and he visited the Organization on several occasions.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I should like to convey my profound sympathy to His Majesty King Harald V, his family and the people of Norway.

May I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His late Majesty King Olav V of Norway.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Norway.

Mr. HUSLID (Norway): I should like to thank you most sincerely, Mr. President, for the noble words you have just said. Through you, I thank also all the representatives and other good friends here, including the Secretary-General, for the tribute they have paid to the memory of our late King Olav, both at the time of his death and again this morning.

(Mr. Huslid, Norway)

King Olav was very dear to us in Norway, and therefore we are very grateful for the tribute that has been paid here to his memory.

EARTHQUAKES IN COSTA RICA AND PANAMA

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of all the members of the General Assembly, may I extend our deepest sympathy to the Governments and the peoples of Costa Rica and Panama on the tragic loss of life and extensive material damage that have resulted from the recent earthquakes.

May I also express the hope that the international community will show its solidarity and respond promptly and generously to any request for help.

I now call on the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. TATTENBACH (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the Government of Costa Rica and of my people, I have the honour of expressing our heartfelt and sincere gratitude for the solidarity evidenced in your words, Mr. President, about my country and the sister Republic of Panama. It is certainly true that at a time of anguish and pain the support and understanding of others are of special significance. In this case, the international solidarity evidenced through your attitude, Sir, will be a source of consolation to Costa Ricans.

The earthquake that struck the Atlantic coast of Costa Rica and part of that of Panama registered 7.4 on the Richter scale and caused considerable loss of human life; indeed, it has not yet been possible to determine the exact figure because victims continue to be found under the debris. What I would term extremely grave damage has also been caused to the country's infrastructure. The main highway to the Atlantic was severely damaged in many areas, and bridges over the same route collapsed and fell into the rivers that

(Mr. Tattenbach, Costa Rica)

they spanned. So far as housing is concerned, the damage was also enormous. Despite the fact that the buildings involved were in general light and flexible in construction, the force of the earthquake destroyed them. In summary, the list of property damage is long and as yet difficult to assess accurately.

None the less, what is important is not to relate what was lost but, rather, to find the moral strength, and I would say also the physical strength, that to a great extent comes from friendly nations, in order to confront the task of reconstruction. With the help of all, we shall be able to rebuild our Atlantic region.

(Mr. Tattenbach, Costa Rica)

Before concluding, I cannot fail to express, on my own behalf and that of my delegation, my solidarity with, and sympathy for, the great people and the Government of the United States in respect of the violent storms which have struck there in recent days.

As in the case of Costa Rica, I think that the great moral resources of the American people will help mitigate the damage caused by nature and take full charge of the situation. We hope that in this case, as in our own, peace between nature and mankind will return once more.

Mr. HEART (Panama) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish first of all in my brief comments to say how very pleased my delegation is to see you, Mr. President, at the forefront in guiding the work of the resumed forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, and to congratulate you on your successful discharge of your difficult responsibilities. Secondly, we wish to thank you very much indeed for the interest you have shown both in our brother country, Costa Rica, and in our own country, Panama, by referring to the grave natural disaster that affected these two countries so enormously on the 22nd of this month.

Panama is a country which, with a great will to overcome, with great courage and with supreme effort, is rising out of the difficult economic, social and political situation in which it was placed by a dictatorship, and its collateral effects, which lasted 21 years, a dictatorship which was recently eliminated, just a year and four months ago. Also, we are sure that with that same courage, with that same effort, and with the support we are convinced we will be receiving from the international community represented here, we will be able to overcome this situation with our usual proud despatch.

The damage, for a country as small as ours, is great, and our needs are enormous. According to the most recent official figures at our disposal, the

(Mr. Heart, Panama)

areas affected are the provinces which produce our main export products, such as bananas: I am referring to the provinces of Chiriquilas and Bocas del Toro, the latter of which is the most affected by these onslaughts of nature. Our Government has declared the region a natural disaster area. A high percentage of the population in this region are indigenous people, and for our Government, they are one of the main social priorities of the present time.

The places most severely damaged by the earthquake, force 7.5 on the Richter scale, were: Guabito, Changuinola, the island of Colón, Almirante and other places in Bocas del Toro province. The earthquake took 32 lives, 500 people were injured, tens of thousands have suffered losses, public services such as hospitals, schools, electricity, and water have been destroyed. Over 1,000 houses have been destroyed, and the economic losses run into the millions, which is a serious setback to the economic resurgence the Government has been trying to achieve since the fall of the dictatorship.

In conclusion, our delegation would like to express its gratitude to our brother countries of Central America, which, under the spokesmanship of Nicaragua, have taken the fortunate initiative of preparing a draft resolution requesting emergency economic assistance from the United Nations for Costa Rica and Panama. We also express our gratitude to the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for the solidarity they have extended to Costa Rica and Panama by endorsing this draft resolution, and, in like manner, we express our gratitude in advance to the members of the General Assembly for their support, in solidarity with Costa Rica and Panama, when they adopt, by consensus, this request for emergency economic assistance which those two countries need so desperately.

EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

The PRESIDENT: May I also, on behalf of all the members of the Assembly, extend to the Government and the people of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, struck this morning by an earthquake, our deepest sympathy at this natural disaster, which has caused tragic loss of life and extensive material damage. May I also express the hope that the international community will show its solidarity and respond promptly and generously to any request for help.

Mr. RAZVIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): My delegation sincerely thanks you, Sir, and through you, the whole world community, for your expressions of sympathy at the natural disaster which has struck our country. We note with satisfaction the spirit of mutual assistance and support which prevails in the United Nations. We assure you, Sir, that the good feelings of the world community will be conveyed to the Soviet Government and people.

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/45/1004)

The PRESIDENT: Before turning to the next item on our agenda, I should like, in keeping with the established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/45/1004, which contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General in which he informs the Assembly that 16 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter. Document A/45/1004 is available this morning in provisional form only.

I am informed that, since the issuance of the aforementioned document, Grenada has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount

(The President)

specified in Article 19 of the Charter. Consequently, the final version of document A/45/1004 will reflect this situation and list only 15 Member States.

I should like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter

"A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contribution due from it for the preceding two full years."

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 8 (continued)

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

(a) REOPENING OF AGENDA ITEMS 17 (h), 79 (b), 118 AND 126 (c)

(b) REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ADDITIONAL ITEM SUBMITTED BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/45/240 and Add.1)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to invite the attention of members to a note by the Secretary-General (A/45/142/Add.1) informing the General Assembly that he has received notification of the resignation of a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee and that, accordingly, the General Assembly will be required to appoint a person to fill the unexpired portion of his term of office.

In order to enable the Assembly to take the required action, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-item (h) of agenda item 17, entitled "Appointment of a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee". In the circumstances, may I take it that the Assembly has no objection to reopening consideration of sub-item (h) of agenda item 17?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 1990, the Assembly allocated this sub-item to the Fifth Committee.

May I take it that the Assembly again wishes to allocate this sub-item to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform members that by letter dated 10 April 1991, addressed to me, the President of the Trade and Development Board has transmitted to me resolution 391 (XXXVII) adopted by the Trade and Development Board regarding a change of the date and venue of the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development which had been determined by General Assembly resolution 45/205 of 21 December 1990. The President of the Trade and Development Board requests that the Assembly consider this matter for appropriate action at its resumed session.

It will thus be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 79, entitled "Trade and development", in order to enable the General Assembly to take a decision on the new date and venue.

In the circumstances, may I take it that the Assembly has no objection to reopening consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 79?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to propose that this sub-item be considered directly in plenary meeting. If there is no objection, we shall proceed accordingly.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Sub-item (b) of agenda item 79 will be considered in plenary meeting on Thursday 2 May, in the morning.

I now wish to inform the Assembly that I have been advised that the Fifth Committee is now in a position to take up the question relating to the conditions of service of members of the Joint Inspection Unit, as the report of the Secretary-General on this matter was recently circulated in document A/C.5/45/75.

(The President)

In order to enable the General Assembly to take the required action, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 118, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991".

In the circumstances, may I take it that the Assembly has no objection to reopening consideration of agenda item 118?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 1990, the Assembly allocated this sub-item to the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly again wishes to allocate this sub-item to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I also wish to inform the Assembly that I have been advised that the Fifth Committee has yet to take action on amendments to the Staff Regulations contained in the report of the Secretary-General circulated in document A/C.5/45/3 and corrigendum 1 and addendum 1.

In order to enable the General Assembly to take the required action, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 126, entitled "Other personnel questions".

In the circumstances, may I take it that the Assembly has no objection to reopening consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 126?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 1990, the Assembly allocated the sub-item to the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the Assembly again wishes to allocate this sub-item to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now consider the Secretary-General's request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the forty-fifth session.

In this connection, a note by and a report of the Secretary-General have been circulated in documents A/45/240 and A/45/240/Add.1. In his note, the Secretary-General, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure, requests that an additional item of an important and urgent character be placed on the agenda, entitled "Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 687 (1991): (a) United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission; (b) Other activities". Owing to the nature of the item, he also requests that the item be allocated to the Fifth Committee for consideration.

Under the circumstances of the present case, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees that the provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of an additional item on the agenda, can be waived?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: May I also take it that the Assembly wishes to include an additional item to read as follows: "Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 687 (1991): (a) United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission; (b) Other activities", and to allocate that item to the Fifth Committee for consideration?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The Chairman of the Fifth Committee will be informed of the decisions just taken concerning the Fifth Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 134 (continued)

ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS: REPORT OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE (A/45/903)

The PRESIDENT: At the request of some delegations, consideration of the report of the Fifth Committee on this item is postponed until Thursday, 2 May.

AGENDA ITEM 117 (continued)

REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/45/714)

(b) LETTER FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GHANA (A/45/991)

(c) LETTER FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LUXEMBOURG (A/45/999)

(d) LETTER FROM DENMARK, FINLAND, ICELAND, NORWAY AND SWEDEN (A/45/1001)

The PRESIDENT: Members will recall that, by the terms of resolution 45/177, the Assembly decided that it would reconvene for a duration of one week for an in-depth consideration and negotiations of proposals for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields.

Members will also recall that the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations intergovernmental structure and functions in the economic and social fields was issued on 20 November 1990 as document A/45/714.

The Assembly also has before it a letter from the Permanent Representative of Ghana transmitting the formal position paper of the Group of 77 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields (A/45/991), as well as a letter from the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg transmitting the formal position paper of the European Community and its 12 member States also on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields

(The President)

(A/45/999). A letter from the representatives of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden transmitting a joint Nordic discussion paper entitled "Reform and restructuring of United Nations economic and social sector" has been issued as document A/45/1001.

In order to allow members to meet in informal consultations with a view to preparing a broad-based resolution, there will be no plenary meeting of the Assembly until Thursday 2 May, in the morning.

(The President)

I should like to thank members for the cooperation extended to the Permanent Representative of Fiji in his capacity as Vice-President of the Assembly, and to me personally, in the consultations concerning agenda item 117.

May I also take this opportunity to request that we do our utmost to conclude those and other related consultations as expeditiously as possible in order to permit the timely issuance of a draft resolution on Wednesday, 1 May, which will enable the Assembly to consider it on Thursday, 2 May. I know I can count on members' understanding and continuing cooperation in this matter.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: Before adjourning the meeting I should like to make an announcement in regard to the Assembly's programme of work for this week.

As I have just informed members, there will be no plenary meetings until Thursday, 2 May. That will allow time for informal consultations on agenda item 117 and for the Fifth Committee to consider the agenda items allocated to it.

On Thursday, 2 May, the Assembly will consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 17 (h), "Appointment of a member of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee"; agenda item 118, "Programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991"; agenda item 126 (c), "Other personnel questions"; agenda item 132, "Financing of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group"; agenda item 134, "Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations"; and agenda item 156, just inscribed on the agenda, "Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 687 (1991). The Assembly will also take up agenda item 79 (b),

(The President)

"Trade and Development", and agenda item 117, "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations".

The Assembly will also consider, under agenda item 86, "Special economic and disaster relief assistance," the question of special emergency assistance to Haiti. I should also like to inform members that I have received a letter dated 26 April 1991 from the representatives of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua advising me that they intend to submit a draft resolution regarding the emergency situation in Costa Rica and Panama. The aforementioned draft resolution has been issued as document A/45/L.45. Agenda itewm 86 will be considered at the same meeting on Thursday, 2 May.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.